

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 SCS-03 SY-05

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DRAFTED BY AF/E:RSBARRETT:JR

APPROVED BY AF - NATHANIEL DAVIS

AF/E:WBCOOTE

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P 141844Z JUN 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 139932

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, CAS, ET, US, (HANNA, RICHARD)

SUBJECT: HANNA CASE

REF: (A) STATE 122246 (B) ADDIS 6690 (C) ADDIS 6758

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS CALLED IN ETHIOPIAN CHARGE MEKBIB ON JUNE 11 FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF HANNA CASE. DAVIS STATED WE HAD NOT RECEIVED SATISFACTORY REPLIES TO OUR APPROACHES IN EITHER WASHINGTON OR ADDIS, SINCE ASSURANCES PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED REGARDING AN EARLY RESOLUTION OF THE CASE HAD NOT BEEN BORNE OUT. NOW WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT HANNA IS TO BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL BUT WE HAVE NOT BEEN INFORMED OF THE CHARGES. THE FACT THAT THIS DECISION COMES SIX MONTHS AFTER THE INITIAL ARREST IS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL WAYS THAT THE PMG'S HANDLING OF THE CASE HAS VIOLATED THE TREATY OF AMITY AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS. OTHER VIOLATIONS WERE THAT WE WERE NOT INFORMED AT THE TIME OF THE ARREST, HANNA WAS NOT GIVEN CONSULAR ACCESS OR ACCESS TO COUNSEL FOR TWO WEEKS AFTER HIS ARREST, HE HAS BEEN DETAINED FOR SIX MONTHS WITHOUT TRIAL, AND WE HAVE STILL NOT RECEIVED INFORMATION ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

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CHARGES TO BE ENTERED AGAINST HIM.

2. DAVIS TOLD MEKBIB THAT IT IS FORTUNATE THAT THIS CASE HAS NOT YET RECEIVED PUBLICITY, WHICH COULD

TRIGGER REACTIONS THAT NEITHER USG NOR PMG DESIRES. CONCERN ON THIS CASE HAS BEEN ALLEVIATED TO DATE BY CITING THE ASSURANCES WE HAD RECEIVED THAT HANNA'S RELEASE WAS IMMINENT.

3. DAVIS SAID THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO CHANGE THE PAST BUT THAT THE MANNER IN WHICH THE CASE WAS HANDLED IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE COULD BE OF GREAT HELP IN PREVENTING SERIOUS HARM TO US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS. IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY UNFORTUNATE IF ANY IRREVERSIBLE COURSE OF ACTION WERE NOW TAKEN WHICH WOULD FURTHER EXACERBATE THE SITUATION.

4. DAVIS SAID THAT U.S. AND ETHIOPIAN INTERESTS WOULD BE BEST SERVED, NOW THAT THE DECISION TO TRY HANNA HAD BEEN TAKEN, BY A QUICK, EARLY TRIAL. WE HAVE BEEN LED TO BELIEVE THAT THE CHARGES AGAINST HANNA ARE RELATIVELY MINOR AND WE DO NOT QUESTION HIS PROSECUTION FOR ADMITTED OFFENSES. HOWEVER, DAVIS EMPHASIZED THAT HANNA HAD ALREADY BEEN UNDER DETENTION FOR SIX MONTHS ON SUSPICION OF MINOR OFFENSES AND THAT THIS MIGHT WELL BE ENOUGH PUNISHMENT EVEN IF HE WERE CONVICTED. THE MATTER COULD BE CLEARED BY EXPELLING HANNA FROM ETHIOPIA AT AN EARLY DATE. DAVIS CLOSED HIS PRESENTATION CITING HIS HOPE THAT THE MATTER COULD SOON BE RESOLVED IN THE INTEREST OF OUR CONTINUED GOOD RELATIONS.

5. MEKBIB THANKED DAVIS FOR HIS CLARIFICATION AND ELABORATION. HE ASSURED US THAT HE AND OTHER ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN ENERGETICALLY TRYING TO RESOLVE THE CASE. AFTER HIS LAST CONFERENCE WITH DAVIS ON MAY 23 HE HAD SPOKEN TO HIS FOREIGN MINISTER. HE REALIZED THAT THE ANSWERS HE HAD SO FAR OBTAINED HAD NOT BEEN SATISFACTORY TO US BUT WANTED TO ASSURE US OF THE CONCERN AND CONTINUED EFFORTS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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(MOFA) TOWARD A SPEEDY RESOLUTION OF THE HANNA CASE. HE SAID THAT THE MINISTRY COULD NOT INTERVENE DIRECTLY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN ETHIOPIA BUT THAT IN THE COURSE OF FREQUENT CONTACTS WITH THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE THE MOFA HAD BEEN ASSURED THAT THE

CASE WOULD SOON BE RESOLVED. THIS WAS THE BASIS FOR THE STATEMENTS MADE TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN ADDIS.

6. MEKBIB SAID THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MFA, IN SPITE OF THEIR LACK OF SUCCESS IN OBTAINING A RESOLUTION OF THE HANNA CASE, HAD AT LEAST OBTAINED SUSPENSION BUT NOT REPEAT NOT DISMISSAL OF THE CHARGES

AGAINST HIM. AFTER HANNA HAD TESTIFIED AS A WITNESS IN ANOTHER CASE, THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY HAD JUDGED THAT HIS TESTIMONY AND OTHER INFORMATION DIVULGED UNDER INTERROGATION CONTAINED SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO WARRANT A TRIAL. MEKBIB READ PARTS OF THE NOTE WHICH HAD BEEN DELIVERED TO THE EMBASSY ON JUNE 5, SPECIFICALLY CITING THE POINTS MADE IN PARAGRAPH 2, REF B.

7. MEKBIB AGAIN ASSURED US OF THE MOFA'S EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THIS CASE, EXPRESSING THE OPINION THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY SUCH A QUOTE MINOR UNQUOTE CASE. DAVIS INTERJECTED TO ASSURE MEKBIB THAT THE UNITED STATES DID NOT CONSIDER THE HANNA CASE TO BE MINOR BUT REGARDED IT AS AN IMPORTANT MATTER. MEKBIB CONCEDED THAT THE HANNA CASE WAS NOT MINOR IN ITSELF AND SAID HE HIMSELF TREATED IT AS IMPORTANT. BUT HE SAID THAT IN THE PRESENT SITUATION OF HIS COUNTRY, BUFFETED BY CONFLICTING FORCES, CLASHES OF PERSONALITIES AND SIGNIFICANT POPULAR MOVEMENTS, ETHIOPIA NEEDED THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES AND ALL FRIENDLY COUNTRIES. THE LONG-RUN INTERESTS OF ETHIOPIA AND THE ETHIOPIA-US RELATIONSHIP SHOULD NOT BE JEOPARDIZED BY SHORT-RUN PROBLEMS, NO MATTER HOW IMPORTANT THEY MIGHT BE IN THEMSELVES.

8. DAVIS SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE DIFFICULTIES PRESENTLY AFFECTING ETHIOPIA AND WAS TRYING TO REMAIN SO. BUT HE ASKED MEKBIB AGAIN NOT, REPEAT NOT, TO CATEGORIZE THE HANNA CASE AS A MINOR PROBLEM. HE REPEATED THAT THE USG REGARDED IT AS IMPORTANT AND ASKED MEKBIB TO CONVEY OUR DEEP CONCERN TO THE PMG. HE UNDERSTOOD WHY IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO TRY HANNA BUT COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY IT HAD TAKEN SO LONG AND WHY TREATY OBLIGATIONS WERE DISREGARDED. HE EXPRESSED THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT'S HOPE THAT

THE MATTER COULD NOW BE GIVEN THE ATTENTION AND ACTION NECESSARY SO THAT IT WOULD NOT BECOME A GREATER PROBLEM.

9. MEKBIB ONCE AGAIN DESCRIBED THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS' EARNEST EFFORTS WHICH WOULD CONTINUE. HE AGAIN SAID HE DID NOT CONSIDER THE MATTER ITSELF AS QUOTE MINOR UNQUOTE BUT THAT HE NEVERTHELESS WANTED TO ASSERT AGAIN HIS BELIEF THAT SUCH A MATTER SHOULD NOT AFFECT ETHIOPIAN-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP. THIS FRIENDSHIP WAS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO ETHIOPIA.

HE WANTED IT TO CONTINUE AND HE HOPED THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW MONTHS WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO DIMINISH IT. HE WOULD PERSONALLY CONTINUE TO WORK HARD ON THIS CASE AND WAS DOING SO BECAUSE HE PERSONALLY VALUED THE RELATIONSHIP AND WANTED IT TO CONTINUE.

10. DAVIS ASSURED MEKBIB THAT THE FRIENDSHIP OF ETHIOPIA WAS ALSO IMPORTANT TO THE UNITED STATES WHICH WAS ONE OF THE REASONS THE HANNA CASE CONCERNED US AND WE DESIRED TO BRING ABOUT A QUICK RESOLUTION.

11. MEKBIB SAID HE WOULD TRANSMIT MR. DAVIS' COMMENTS TO ADDIS AND INFORM US OF THE RESPONSE.

12. CHARGE SHOULD SEEK EARLIEST APPOINTMENT WITH FONMIN AND MAKE SURE SAME POINTS TO HIM WHICH ASST SEC DAVIS MADE TO MEKBIB. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE139932
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AF/E:RSBARRETT:JR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750208-0500
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197506101/baaaamrm.tel
Line Count: 182
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>; APPROVED <13 MAY 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PINS, PFOR, CASC, ET, US, (DAVIS, NATHANIEL), (HANNA, RICHARD)
To: ADDIS ABABA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006